REPORT RESUMES

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WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE, A HANDBOOK FOR CONTINUING LANGUAGE STUDY IN THE FIELD.

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DESCRIPTORS- *SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING, *UNCOMMONLY TAUGHT LANGUAGES, *LANGUAGE LEARNING LEVELS, CULTURAL AWARENESS, TAPE RECORDERS, ON THE JOB TRAINING, FOREIGN CULTURE, *AUDIOLINGUAL METHODS,

THIS HANDBOOK WAS WRITTEN FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS BUT IS USEFUL FOR ALL THOSE WHO HAVE HAD BASIC FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING AND NEED INFORMATION ON HOW TO CONTINUE LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE FOREIGN CULTURE WITHOUT FORMAL CLASSES. DISCUSSED IN DETAIL IN THIS HANDBOOK ARE (1) THE LANGUAGE ASSISTANT, (2) USE OF AVAILABLE WRITTEN AND AUDIOLINGUAL MATERIALS, (3) ORGANIZING ONE'S OWN MATERIAL WHEN THERE IS NO OTHER AVAILABLE, AND (4) THE BEST APPROACHES TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ARE GIVEN IN NON-TECHNICAL TERMINOLOGY FOR USE OF A TAPE RECORDER, KINDS OF GRAMMARS AND DICTIONARIES, MAKING USE OF WRITTEN NOTES, AND HOW TO CONSTRUCT AND PRACTICE PATTERN DRILLS. THE AUTHORS EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF SENSITIVITY TO THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF LANGUAGE AND DISCUSS THE COMMON PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE. (JD)

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WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

A Handbook for Continuing Language
Study in the Field

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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PREFACE

This handbook is written with the needs of Peace Corps Volunteers in mind but is useful for anyone learning another language overseas. It is intended to be of assistance at that very critical stage of language learning when the student finds himself in the country for which his training has prepared him, surrounded at last by those who speak the language he has been learning. It does assume, however, that the student has had the benefit of an introductory conversation-oriented course in the language.

The authors are indebted to Peace Corps for financial assistance, to the African Studies Center, Michigan State University for the use of its facilities, and to Mr. and Mrs. H. David McClure for allowing certain materials which they have developed to be incorporated in this volume.

It is hoped that those who use this handbook will find it to be of significant value in their attempt to master a new language and thereby gain entrance into other cultural worlds.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Page

1. What Do I Do Now? 3
2. For What Am I Aiming? 5

SECTION II. THE LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

3. Who Do I Get To Help Me? 9
4. What Do I Do With A Language Assistant? 13
5. What If He Talks Too Fast? 17
6. How Do I Get Further Assistance? 19

SECTION III. USE OF AVAILABLE MATERIAL

7. Of What Value Are Grammar Texts? 25
8. What If There Is No Grammar Available? 27
9. How Do I Best Use A Dictionary? 33
10. How Can I Best Make Use of Recorded Materials? ... 35
11. Will Reading on My Own Be Helpful? 39

SECTION IV. MY OWN MATERIALS

12. How Can I Organize My Materials? 43
13. How Do I Drive The Material Home? 47
14. What If I Have To Learn A Language I Haven't Studied? 55

SECTION V. MYSELF: THE MAJOR PROBLEM

15. What If I Make Mistakes And People Laugh At Me? ... 63
16. What If The New Language Doesn't Stick? 65
17. How Do I Train Myself To Hear Better? 67
18. How Can I Become More Fluent? 71
19. How Can I Evaluate My Progress? 75

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

Your training program is over. You've made it! You've learned a lot of things about the new world you will be entering. Among the most important of these things is the language.

Perhaps most of all, you've discovered how much you don't know about that language. You've learned (or soon will) that you're going to have to add to what you have learned during the training period if you expect to be effective in your work in your new environment. But how do you go about it?

In the first place, you're going to need help. You'll need the books you used in your language course. You should purchase additional books on the language recommended by your instructor. A couple of more general books that will be helpful to you are:

Nida, Eugene A., Learning a Foreign Language. New York: Friendship Press, 1957.

Cornelius, Edwin T., How To Learn A Foreign Language. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1955.

But a more important source of help will be the native speakers of the language whom you engage either formally or informally to assist you in your language learning. These are the true sources of the language, for language is a "people thing," not a "book thing" and the books are but a means to your making more efficient use of your time with those who speak the language.

Language learning is time consuming and you will have to spend much effort and time with the speakers of the language. You will be enriched by doing so for you will discover patterns of thought, values, and views on life which you can find only through the language of the people. Knowing the language means knowing the people. Dr. Nida has said, "Language learning is more than simple mechanical ability to produce acoustic signals; it is a process by which we make vital contacts with a new community, a new manner of life, and a new system of thinking."

Writing is also helpful. You have learned from your introductory course to write the language as it sounds. You will need to employ this writing system now to record a large number of words that you have never seen in print. To do so, you will want to make limited use of a notebook in which to jot down new expressions. But your primary dependence must be on your ears and your mouth--because language is a spoken thing and the symbols you put on paper are merely aids which you may use to assist your ears and mouth.

For this reason you may find a tape recorder very helpful if one is available to you--provided, of course, you make it your servant and don't allow it to become your master.

You need to get started on your own to continue your language learning. The easiest way to do this may be to read quickly through this handbook marking and listing the suggestions that appear to be most practical in terms of your situation.

The following may be some of the more important points on such a list:

1. Evaluate the materials at hand, reviewing what you have already learned.

2. Make arrangements for a language assistant to work a set amount of time with you each day.

3. Mark time on your schedule each day to spend with your language assistant, to practice the language in the market, to visit someone's home (primarily to practice the language), etc.

4. Plan how you will collect and organize your own materials.

The purpose of this book is to help you to answer the question: "What do I do now?" to continue language learning in the field. It is written by people who have had to answer the question for themselves and to assist others in answering the same question.

Chapter 2

FOR WHAT AM I AIMING?

If you limit your contacts overseas to those who speak English, you may get the impression that you don't need to know the language of the people in the country in which you live. You may, in fact, fall into the error of many tourists who glibly state that "everybody in this country speaks English" and come to feel, therefore, that the time and energy you have expended in the study of their language has been wasted. You will, however, notice that the contexts in which these people depend on English are extremely limited. When they relax and become their real selves, they speak their native tongue. Thus, if you really want to get to know people as they are, you must push forward in learning their language.

Perhaps, however, your attempts to continue learning their language will turn out to be a frustrating experience and you will find it difficult to maintain your interest and motivation. In your basic course you spoke the new language but didn't have to really depend on it for communicating your thoughts. In this new situation, however, you desire to truly communicate, and the language becomes a necessary tool rather than merely an academic exercise. A definition of your aims can be helpful in organizing and providing direction for your efforts.

What is your goal in learning the new language? Is it enough that you have been able to survive the training program and can now create a bit of good will by parroting the few phrases learned during your language course that survived your final visit home and the trip to the new land? Or, are you determined that nothing is going to keep you from learning to really share what is inside your head and heart and inside the heads and hearts of the people you have come to work with?

What subjects will you want to talk about? You have been exposed to a certain number of typical situations during your language course. Your ability to function in these areas will need to be developed considerably beyond what you have already learned if you are to really put yourself across to the people whose language you have begun to learn. And there are many situations not dealt with in your course that must be gotten into.

Many Peace Corps Volunteers, and others in a similar position, have been content to stop where their introductory course stopped. They experienced the thrill of being able to get off the plane and really "wow" the people of the new land with their language ability. But they stopped right there and only later--when it was too late--came to realize that the fact that they did not continue their language learning had doomed them to be perpetual outsiders wherever they went, in whatever they did in the country where they served.

Many people--feeling that "you either have it or you don't" with regard to language ability--think that only linguists should strive to really master a language. This mastery should, however, be the goal of everyone who does not wish to be seriously handicapped in his service abroad. You may recall talking to a foreigner who had a pronounced accent or groped for words as you conversed. You were embarrassed and found it hard to appreciate such a person and you probably looked for the first opportunity to "turn him off." He knew enough of your language to get along in your land, but he was definitely limited in making friends, getting to know people, and becoming involved in the life of the people around him. In order to function effectively in your new environment, you must aim at nothing less than mastery of the new language.

It is sometimes dangerous, however, to evaluate your ability in terms of the way you get along with those you see everyday. It may be that they have learned to understand your individual version of their language. Some people working overseas have been known to insist that the people of neighboring villages speak a different language since they couldn't be understood there. The real difficulty was, though, that the people of these villages had not had the opportunity to learn to understand the new "brand" of their language. One of your goals must be to learn to speak like a native speaker, and this will necessitate frequent movement outside of the circle of your close associates to make sure you are in a position to obtain feedback from as wide a variety of sources as possible.

The more time you spend with the people, the more sure you will be that your greatest goal should be near-native command of the language. You'll realize that thought patterns, values, habits, interests are inseparable from the way people express themselves. In order to be included and able to express your views and interests (and be understood), you will need near-native command of the language. Your real contribution during the time you live in their land will be proportionate to your ability in their language.

SECTION II

THE LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

Chapter 3

WHO DO I GET TO HELP ME?

Since you have some conversational ability and a basic understanding of the structure of the language, you are ready to work with a language assistant. By meeting with this person regularly you will have opportunity to check things you've been hearing among the people as well as to practice speaking with one person and thus dig deeper into the new system of thinking.

However, your language assistant must be carefully chosen. He must be a native speaker of the language and one linked to and respected by those about him. He will probably become your best friend and therefore your greatest asset (or liability) in your relationships to others.

Choose a person who will be willing to correct you when you say something wrong. This is the most important prerequisite of a good language assistant. You'll need to convince him by your appreciative attitude toward his correction that you are sincere in your desire to learn the language correctly. Your language assistant must also be very patient with you since you are sure to require constant repetition and correction. If, in addition, your assistant is good-natured, friendly, and has a good sense of humor, you have obtained an ideal person.

If you can associate your progress in the language with the prestige of your language assistant, you may find his motivation for helping you increased. The amount of correction you get from him will be greatly increased if he gets the credit, or feels that others may blame him, for the way you speak his language. Never argue with your language assistant. At times you may not be able to understand why he considers something important that seems quite insignificant to you. Most of us who have worked with good language assistants have felt this way from time to time but have found that eventually it is usually his judgment rather than ours that is vindicated. In any event, take pains to keep from seeming to belittle your assistant's ability or intelligence.

The success or failure of your work with your language assistant depends greatly on how well you can get along with each other. Be careful not to underpay or overpay him. Carefully arrange your hours together so that he understands clearly what you expect from him. At any cost, avoid giving him the impression that you think his language, his people, or his country is in any way inferior to your own. Don't compare his language to English or brag about your country to him.

Be careful that if anyone is put on the spot it is you rather than your assistant. Talk about things that he understands and knows about even though it may be more difficult for you. Instead of discussing ocean liners or the exciting places you have visited, for example, talk about the kind of travel or kind of occupation most familiar to him. If someone makes fun of the way you say something, be careful not to pass the blame onto your language assistant even if it is doubtful that you are in error.

Your goal is to respond naturally in the language, so don't insist on a certain combination of words if your assistant doesn't readily accept the phrase. Some, for example, in learning African languages have insisted that they be taught some equivalent of the expression "please," which they could use when asking for something in order to feel that they were being polite. Usually the language assistant has managed to construct some sort of equivalent if pressed for it, but the use of such an expression in the contexts where one would use "please" in English seems quite foreign to the native speakers.

A related problem is that of the use of words or concepts that are frequent in the new language in a way that is like its nearest English equivalent but not like the normal use of that word or concept in the foreign language. Such an occurrence has given rise to a new proverb in the Hausa language of Northern Nigeria. The proverb is: "Watakila (which is commonly translated 'maybe') keeps a European from telling a lie." The reference is to the fact that it is common for Europeans to answer "watakila" rather than "yes" or "no," if they are asked whether or not they intend to do something and they wish to postpone (or avoid) the decision. The reason for the proverb (which is rather sarcastic) is that while "maybe" or "perhaps" is the intended answer, and often times these are possible translations for watakila, a Hausa person using watakila in this context would wish to convey a high degree of probability rather than a low degree of possibility. The European, however, using the Hausa word as if it were the exact equivalent of the English "maybe" in order to avoid telling a lie, is actually guilty of quite seriously misrepresenting his intentions. A good language assistant can help you prevent such misunderstanding.

Choose, then, as your language assistant someone who is concerned enough about the development of your language ability to correct you consistently, someone who is amiable and both liked and respected by the people of the community, someone with whom you can build and maintain a relationship meaningful in terms both of the language learning situation and of the purposes for which you have come to his land. Such a person need not be "educated" from a European or American point of view. In fact, often those so educated have, by virtue of the fact that they have been attending Western schools during their formative years, gotten so out of touch with the mainstream of their own culture that it is not advisable to depend on them for guidance into that culture.

Chapter 4

WHAT DO I DO WITH A LANGUAGE ASSISTANT?

Mimicry and review are the keys to successful language learning. Listen carefully to what is said, mimic as accurately as you can and be open to criticism. Practice often the things you are learning.

At the start, review the materials in your introductory course with your language assistant. This will help him to become aware of how much of his language you have been exposed to. Your textbook can be used as the jumping-off place for your continued learning. If, for example, you have discussed in your introductory course the work of a tailor, a butcher, and a teacher, you should now dig more deeply into these vocations and then go on to investigate other vocations such as taxi driving, itinerant trading, etc., not dealt with in your introductory course.

Soon you will need to begin to develop your own collection of materials. Start by writing ten to fifteen useful phrases per day on file slips, using the writing system you learned in your introductory course. Be sure when you write the utterances to make consistent use of any diacritical marks used in your introductory course (especially if you are learning a tone language).

Carefully go over each of these phrases with your language assistant to be sure you have the pronunciation (including tone and/or intonation) correct and memorize them. Review these phrases often--those that come easiest for you less often than those you find more difficult to retain.

In addition to obtaining assistance with the pronunciation of these utterances from your language assistant, you should discuss the contexts in which each of the phrases is employed in order to get a firm grip on the meanings of the utterances you are learning. If you learn to approach the investigation of meaning in the new language by obtaining illustrative examples of this nature (which should then be noted on your vocabulary slips) from your language assistant, rather than by simply asking for translations of the phrases, you will find yourself gaining a great "feel" for meanings.

When you seek to discover new expressions, it is more rewarding and less likely to lead you into the type of misuse of the language illustrated in the preceding chapter if you "set a scene" for your assistant rather than simply asking him how to say such-and-such in his language. Ask him, for example, what he might say to put across a certain idea in a given situation. At the beginning of your experience, it will usually be necessary to describe such a situation in English, but as you progress, you should attempt more and more to do such describing in his language. By setting the scene for him in this way, you will be more likely to get a natural response in his language and better learn how to talk about your experiences in his language and in terms of his world.

To say in one language I know, for example, "Let me go out for a walk," you would need to say, "let me drink air." It would be unlikely that you would get this from asking the English phrase without setting the scene. You'll observe in this same culture that you don't knock on the door when you arrive at someone's house--you call. Your language assistant will be able to teach you the call and the response. Since, however, this differs from our custom you would be unlikely to get the proper expression without setting the scene for him.

For action words, setting the scene may be accomplished by demonstrating the action. Lift a box and ask, "What am I doing?" Set it on the table and have your language assistant comment on your action. Carry it in the way appropriate to his culture and discover how this is expressed in his language.

Your time spent with the language assistant should be carefully planned ahead and it should include much variety. The initiative for directing the language study is now yours. You no longer have a trained language teacher to guide you--you are both learner and teacher.

Each day a portion of your time with your language assistant should be used to check materials and to gather more material. To maximize the learning opportunities, follow these basic steps:
1) explain what you need to know or check; 2) listen; 3) mimic;
4) listen; 5) mimic; 6) write and read back what you've written;
7) listen and check your written material; 8) repeat again.

Always remember that the language you want to learn is the spoken language and the more often you say something aloud, the quicker you will learn it. It will be necessary to use some of the time with your language assistant each day in working on drills.

Use the drill materials in your basic course to guide you in setting up your own drills for practice. See Chapter 13 for additional suggestions, but don't be bound by the suggestions given there--launch out on your own and experiment with new ideas for drills too.

Each day at least half of your time with your language assistant should be used in talking with him in his language. Plan these conversations in detail ahead of time. Ask him about himself, his experiences during the day, his family, etc. You can also give him a report of something you did since you last saw him, using as many details as you can. Again you'll have to be sure the language assistant is constantly critical of your pronunciation and use of words and phrases.

Your conversation time will be most valuable if you take a situation to talk about--a trip, the market, a room, a sick friend, a custom. Questions prepared on subjects such as these will make your conversation time more interesting and valuable. When you don't understand something your language assistant has said, ask about it in his language. Do not fall back into using English; this conversation time is for your practice in using the new language. If he uses a word you have never heard when explaining something to you, ask him in his language, "What does ________ mean?" or "Tell me about ________."

Role playing gives variety to the conversation time. Have your language assistant be the butcher and you take first the part of a cook who comes to buy, then the owner of a goat who comes to sell, etc. Discussing articles from the newspaper or a magazine or something you've heard on the radio is very helpful and will prepare you for informal conversations later on your own. Pictures from books, magazines, calendars, or the newspaper can provide topics for discussion as well.

Always be careful to use material relevant to his culture. Folktales and other kinds of stories, especially if they involve conversation between the participants in the story, are an excellent way to get into the language and culture. If you have access to a tape recorder, record the story. Write the story down later when you are alone with your machine. Then check it carefully with your language assistant. If you do not have a tape recorder write the story as you repeat it after him the second or third time he tells it. Read it aloud back to him, having him correct your pronunciation when necessary. If possible, have him give you a rough translation of the text. Sometime later you should discuss in his language the new words and concepts from the text.

Chapter 5

WHAT IF HE TALKS TOO FAST?

You may at times want to slow your language assistant down a bit as he speaks. For your own benefit it is better to keep to a natural conversational speed most of the time. Remember, the problem is not that he speaks too fast but that you hear too slow--and you need to learn to hear up to speed, not to slow him down to an unnatural speed. Slowing down a speaker tends to change the sounds, rhythm, and intonation. Notice that in English we normally say, "Where'd ja go?" though if slowed down we would say "Where did you go?" which is much less natural.

Never encourage him to pause after each word in a sentence. If the sentence is too lengthy, take the core of it and imitate the assistant's production of it. Then proceed to build up to the complete utterance (always mimicking the assistant's pronunciation), following the techniques described in Chapter 13 for the production of expansion drills. You will find that your attempts at mimicry will let him know where you are having difficulty with an utterance.

Since your goal is near-native command of his language, you will need to be working up to speed as much as possible. Indeed, Dr. Nida suggests that one should practice speaking at a faster than normal speed in order that he not fall below normal speed when he attempts to insert what he has learned in a conversation. You don't want to speak his language like a foreigner. Proper speed, rhythm and intonation contribute a high percentage to the total intelligibility of speech.

When you are out among the people, they will speak too fast. Listen carefully and learn what you can but don't allow yourself to get discouraged. At first you may hear almost nothing. Keep listening and slowly the break through will come. Again, always allow yourself to be the one who is on the spot rather than your assistant or his countrymen. You will ruin their conversation if you demand that everything be slowed down to your speed of understanding. When you are a part of the conversation, however, you may have to occasionally ask politely to have something repeated, and even repeated slowly in order to keep up. Don't expect them to slow down much for you. Remember, to the native speaker his own language is the easiest in the world. You will find that if you are continually exposed to a faster flow of speech, you will begin hearing and understanding the faster speech.

When with understanding friends sometime, make a tape recording of a conversation. As you listen to it over and over, you will be able to hear and understand more and more of the content. No one's feelings will be hurt because you interrupted the conversation and you will have the satisfaction of understanding an up-to-speed conversation.

Chapter 6

HOW DO I GET FURTHER ASSISTANCE?

The fundamental order of language learning is: 1) listening; 2) speaking; 3) reading; 4) writing. Your best workshop is among those who speak the language. Get out where you'll hear the language and get practice listening. Passive listening is as much a learning experience as participating.

Discuss with your language assistant the places you can go to listen and chat with people. Perhaps the first several times he should go along with you. You'll probably find that the best place for you is among those of your own sex. In many countries society is more strictly divided along sex lines, and it would not be proper for women to spend hours chatting with men or vice versa.

Do not take a notebook and pencil the first time you go to a place. Always first demonstrate that you are interested in those with whom you are speaking. After you have established contact with a small group and have convinced them that you are serious about wanting to speak their language well, the use of pad and pencil is not so likely to be misinterpreted. Write down new words and useful sentences and phrases that you hear, with notes on the meaning and the context. You will need to check this material with your language assistant.

Remember that your written materials are merely a crutch. They are to help you speak. They should be employed as a cue to your audio memory so that when you see a written word, your mind's ear "hears" it.

Be careful that you don't look like a secret agent. Do not use your notebook in public gatherings. It will be most useful in small groups where you are already known.

The quality of help you get from those about you will depend on you. You set the standards for the correction you get from others. They will not normally correct you unless you encourage them to do so. Your response to their help will determine whether or not

they'll correct you again. If you insist, "That"s what I said," and repeat it the same way you said it before, they will think you are hopeless and don't really want to learn. If, however, you pay attention to what they say, continually trying to mimic and produce their language properly, you will thereby convince them that you are worth helping.

You'll have to be alert and keep your ears open. Always be sensitive to their feelings and ready, if they become impatient or discouraged with your attempts, to change the subject and focus. But continue working on the problem with your language assistant so that on another day you will not stumble at the same point when with the same people.

To speak the new language well, you will have to get beyond the words and elementary concepts of the language into the broader value system of the culture. You will find the "givens" of this value system constantly affecting the way things are expressed linguistically.

It is common, for example, in the languages of cultures that provide for every adult woman to be married to find no distinction made between "woman" and "wife"--no distinction is necessary since the culture assures that virtually every adult woman will be someone's wife. Likewise, in cultures which regard the prediction of the future (even the near future) as presumptuous, it is common for their languages to require one to say, "If I come tomorrow..." in contexts where English would say "When I come...."

Learning to know the language means learning to know the people. As you learn to talk about things as they talk about them, you will learn a lot about how they view life. You will develop a deeper understanding of their world. Don't force your way into it. If your attitude is such that you are prepared to learn from them, you will find yourself slowly entering and learning to better appreciate their world and their views toward life. Language learning is for us (as for their children) the best means of entrance into their cultural world.

Assuming the role of a learner may be very difficult for you. Perhaps you are a trained teacher arriving in a new land to use your skill and ability. In spite of your many years of education in our culture, you'll soon realize that you have much to learn from another culture. While you are giving of yourself in your trained field, as teacher perhaps, you are also a learner.

A know-it-all attitude will limit your service to them as well as your entrance into their language and life. On the other hand an attitude which demonstrates your sincere interest in them as people and in their language and culture is both the best attitude for language learning and your best ally in being able to put across what you've come to communicate.

Their world is different from ours in many ways--traditions, customs, values, relationships, habits, and expectations. As children we learned about our world through our parents' encouragement and praise, through making mistakes and being laughed at, and through working virtually fulltime at it for years. Now as adults with established habits we need to set aside our inhibitions and restraints and be willing to be laughed at and to make mistakes in order to learn a new language. We are trying, in a short time to break down our well-established habits and attitudes and learn what it takes a child many years to learn--how to get along in a new language and culture.

As you hear the language spoken in the market, homes, and other places in the village, you will notice that the gestures which go with this language are different from our English gestures. Among these gestures are connotatively meaningful movements of the arms, head, hands, and face. You will do well to learn to use them as you see them used.

In Africa, for example, showing how long a thing is by holding your hands so far apart would be quite foreign, whereas indicating the desired length by touching the arm at a point as distant from the fingertips as the object being measured is long would be readily understood.

Pointing with the finger in many societies in immoral; in order to point to something one gestures with the chin, shoulder, or even the tongue. One American overseas was rather shocked to note that her cook kept sticking his tongue out at her as they discussed something that happened to be behind her. He was merely pointing to the subject of their discussion but the discrepancy between the meaning of that gesture in his language and hers proved a bit disturbing at first.

Learning to communicate effectively in a language involves mastering the gesture system as well. The fact that your introductory course probably ignored this aspect of the language makes it incumbent upon you to record such information on your vocabulary slips and learn the gestures along with the vocabulary of the language.

Each new observation and each question that occurs to you whether on language or gesture should be discussed and checked with your language assistant to make sure that you are on the right track.

SECTION III

USE OF AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Chapter 7

OF WHAT VALUE ARE GRAMMAR TEXTS?

The available grammars of the language may, if you use them wisely, be of considerable help to you in your effort to increase your knowledge of the language--even though many such grammars (especially the less recent ones) are geared to teaching you how to read and write the language rather than how to speak it. Since your goal is basically speaking, don't spend too much of your time studying such grammars page by page. It is, however, usually worthwhile to read through the texts several times from start to finish, picking out points to work on with your language assistant. You will find that valuable insights into the language can be gained in this way, even from grammars of inferior quality.

Typically, a given grammar is based on a single dialect of a language. Any grammar you consult will, therefore, correspond to the form of the language that you are learning only if based on that particular dialect. For example, a Spanish grammar describing a dialect spoken in Spain will not fit the dialects of Spanish spoken in Latin America. The fit of your grammar is dependent on the closeness of the dialect of your area to that described by the grammar. Even those that are not suited for your language area can be useful aids to learning if used in the manner suggested above.

There are three basic kinds of grammars: technical descriptive grammars, pedagogical grammars and reference grammars. Some are intended to provide a combination of two or more approaches. The quality of a combination grammar is often somewhat inferior to that of a specialized approach. Nevertheless, it can also be very useful if the above suggestions for using it are followed.

A descriptive grammar is, as its name implies, a description of the technical grammatical features of a language. It is usually written by a linguist and is based on a specific theory of what language is and how it works. This kind of grammar may be valuable to the student (whether or not he has had any linguistic training). It can be used as a source of grammatical information against which to check one's own observations about the grammar of the language. Such a grammar can also serve as a model which you can follow in the event that you find yourself getting more deeply into the language than the grammar does and need assistance in organizing your materials.

A pedagogical (or teaching) grammar is designed to teach the student to speak the language. Ideally, it is based on a thorough linguistic study of the language and presents the features of the language in a carefully controlled sequence and in "bite-size chunks" for ease of learning. It should contain exercises and drills that a student can use to practice on specific features of the grammatical structure.

Many pedagogical grammars are, in reality, a kind of compromise between a reference grammar (see below) and a teaching grammar. Such grammars typically consist of the kind of grammatical explanations mentioned below as characteristic of reference grammars plus lists of vocabulary items and exercises. Such a compromise grammar is of limited value in an introductory course (if it is the only grammar employed) but can be of great value to the person who has to face post-introductory course language learning on his own.

A reference grammar is similar to a descriptive grammar in content. It will tell you the same kinds of things about the sound system and the grammar. However, it is usually designed with the language student, rather than the linguist, in mind and is organized so that information on specific points of grammar can be readily located. A typical reference grammar contains, for example, chapters describing the phonology, the structure and function of the various categories of words (e.g.--nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.), the forms and functions of the various affixes, the various sentence patterns, and the like. A reference grammar is a very useful tool for the language student from the post-introductory level on. In order to master the material in a reference grammar, however, it will usually be necessary for the student to produce his own drills based on the grammatical facts described and illustrated there.

Chapter 8

WHAT SHALL I DO IF THERE IS NO GRAMMAR AVAILABLE?

All is not lost if there is no written grammar of the language you are learning. No grammar at all is often preferable to one that distorts the facts about the language or makes it appear inadequate. For many languages of the world, especially the smaller ones, the available grammars can be quite misleading.

Besides, knowledge about the grammar of the language is not necessarily essential to learning to speak it, though it can provide a valuable shortcut. Many beginning students discover that a concentration on the grammatical facts of a language actually hinders their progress in learning to speak that language. (This is why a good audio-lingual course actually provides relatively little grammatical information as compared to more traditional courses.) If you have a keen ear and a good memory, you can probably learn the grammatical patterns of the language without ever puzzling over the forms of the language and their grammatical function. Children do this by observing and imitating exactly what is said in a specific situation, remembering it, and practicing it at every opportunity.

However, some overt grammatical knowledge can be a real help, especially to those who do not find memorizing language material easy. A word of caution though: remember that your materials are only a crutch to help you learn the new language. Never do more paper work and language analysis than is actually necessary to help you learn to speak the language more quickly and accurately.

As you review what you already know about the grammar of the language you are learning, questions will come to your mind that you cannot answer or are not sure about. Write these down as specifically as you can:

How does the presence of a question word affect the total sentence structure?; How do I recognize a verb form?; How do I express a passive idea?

The investigation of such questions will help to sharpen and focus your powers of observation. Each point should, of course, be gone over with your language assistant. Remember, however, that he is not likely to be skilled in explaining points of grammar and that the means of getting this information should be indirect rather than asking directly for a grammatical explanation.

To organize your grammatical knowledge and to discover more of the grammar, you may find it necessary to set up a do-it-yourself reference grammar. A useful method of organizing your data would be in terms of the following topics:

1. The phonology of the language.

Under this heading you will want to list all of the structurally significant units of sound (known technically as phonemes). These are the sounds which contrast with other sounds in the same or similar environments to signal differences in the meanings of utterances.

For example, p and b are separate phonemes in English (and therefore must be represented by different symbols in our alphabet) because they contrast with each other and account for differences in meaning between words that otherwise would not differ phonologically, e.g.-kūkā (cry) and kūkā̀ (baobab tree) differ only in that the tone of the second syllable of the second word is low as opposed to the tone of the second syllable of the first word which is (like the first syllable of each of the words) high. This phoneme of tone is just as important in Hausa as any of the other phonemes and, therefore, needs to be described in a grammar of the language and represented in the writing system.

It is hoped that your introductory course has provided you with a relatively complete and accurate statement of the basic phonological structure of the language you are learning. If so, you can, in this section of your do-it-yourself grammar, concentrate on recording helpful subsidiary retails such as the following:

- A is pronounced like e after y.
- K after s (as in English skill) does not have a puff of air with it like k in kill (and most other k's in English).
- All syllables in this language end with a vowel.
- A final high tone syllable has a much lower pitch than an initial high tone syllable.

2. The morphology of the language.

This will be a larger section and will include information on each category of the minimum grammatical units which either are themselves words or are involved in the formation of words. These units are known technically as morphemes. Morphemes are the smallest grammatical elements of a language which carry meaning.

Morphemes are usually words or affixes. In English, for example, book is a morpheme and as such cannot be broken down into any but its phonological components. The word books, however, consists of two morphemes: the morpheme book and the morpheme -s. The word bookcases consists of three morphemes: book, case, and -s.

In the section on morphology you will want to devote subsections to each of the classes of words in the language (e.g.-nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, etc.), one or more subsections to the affixes of the language (e.g.-noun prefixes, noun suffixes, verb prefixes, verb suffixes, affixes which make verbs into nouns, etc.), a subsection in which you gather information on how compound words are formed, etc., etc.

It is probably most convenient to collect all of your data on each category of words in a single place. In this case your outline of noun structure might be something like the following (under each subsection you should list and/or describe the morphemes which belong in it):

-Class I Nouns (those which are pluralized by suffixing -a).

-Class II Nouns (those which are pluralized by suffixing -i).

-Class III Nouns (those which are pluralized by a prefix).

-Class IV Nouns (those which are pluralized by doubling the noun).

Noun Affixes:

-Pluralizing affixes (subsections on suffixes and prefixes).

-Possessive affix.

-Affixes which change a noun into a different type of noun (e.g.- ist in English changes art to artist).

-Affix which changes a noun into a verb.

Your introductory course should provide you with the start of such a do-it-yourself reference grammar. You should at least be able to discover the major grammatical categories of the language from that course. Don't expect the grammatical categories in the language you are learning to correspond with those of English unless that language is related to English. Some languages, for example, get along quite nicely without adjectives--the words which translate English adjectives in such a language may actually be nouns (or some other part of speech) in that language.

3. The syntax of the language. Under this heading you should gather information relating to the formation of phrases, clauses and sentences.

You will want to note and come to better understand the various types of phrases (e.g., noun phrases, verb phrases, etc.) and the functions of these phrases (e.g., as subject, predicate, modifiers, etc., in a clause). You will discover that the proper order of words in a given phrase is very important. Does, for example, a modifier precede or follow the noun it modifies? In many languages it is possible to give quite distinctly different impressions by reversing the normal order of a noun and its modifier.

When you turn your attention to the structure and function of clauses in the language you will find yourself faced with questions such as:

-What is absolutely obligatory to the structure of a clause; what is possible but non-essential?

-Which positions in a clause may be filled only by noun phrases; which by verb phrases?

-What is the function (e.g. dependent, independent, relative, etc.) of such-and-such a clause in such-and-such a position in the sentence or when introduced by such-and-such a word or phrase?

Sentence structure and function should be investigated in the same way as clauses. You will probably discover that certain sentences consist of a single clause only while others consist of two or more clauses. With regard to the function of sentences, you will come up with such categories as interrogative, declarative, stative, etc.

In the investigation of syntax especially, it becomes clear that complex linguistic structures are built from simpler structures. That is, it is possible (and usually helpful) to regard it as typical for morphemes to be constructed from phonemes, words from morphemes, phrases from words, clauses from phrases, sentences from clauses, etc. You will note, however, that it is also common for lower level structures to function as, or in place of, higher level structures on occasion, i.e., a single word may replace a whole phrase or even constitute a whole sentence in certain situations (the word "ouch" or the word "yes" often substitute for complete sentences), and a single clause may constitute a complete sentence, and soon.

Some will discover that the production of a do-it-yourself reference grammar (whether or not a reference grammar of the language is already available) can become a fascinating hobby. Others will find that the collecting and organizing of even a modest amount of grammatical material in this way can be extremely valuable in enabling them to go farther into the language than they ever dreamed would be possible in a limited amount of time.

One caution is, however, necessary, particularly for those who make this kind of investigation a hobby: don't let your interest in the analytic aspect of language study slow you down in your attempts to learn to communicate in the language. No degree of knowledge about the language is worthwhile if the gaining of such knowledge causes you to sacrifice the opportunity to learn to function well in the language.

Chapter 9

HOW DO I BEST USE A DICTIONARY?

A good dictionary is an invaluable tool in continuing your language learning. If there is one available in the language you are learning, you should by all means obtain it and use it in the ways suggested below.

There are several types of dictionaries. Among them are:

1. The Bilingual Dictionary which translates words and their illustrations into English (or some other language). It also usually includes an English-to-the-other-language section as well. Here English words are listed and their equivalents in the foreign language given.

2. The Monolingual Dictionary has all of the entries and the definitions in the same language.

3. An Exhaustive Dictionary attempts to provide definitions of every word in a language with illustrations of the use of each word. Such dictionaries are monolingual and very large.

4. The Student's Dictionary is supposed to list and illustrate the most important words in a language. Bi-lingual student's dictionaries are often available.

5. The "One-Word" Dictionary is an inferior type of bilingual dictionary in which the definitions typically consist of a series of single word "equivalents" in, for example, English, with no, or almost no, illustrations. Such a dictionary can be very misleading by giving the impression that it is possible to adequately indicate the meanings of the words of a foreign language in this way. While it is usually handy and usable with caution, it can be seriously misleading if not critically evaluated.

A dictionary is supposed to provide a listing of the vocabulary items of a language, definitions of these items derived from an observation of their usage in the language, plus illustrations of their usage to reinforce and elaborate upon the suggested definitions.

A dictionary can be very helpful to you in increasing your grasp of the area of meaning covered by each word. It will also provide valuable information about the culture of the people. Either word meanings or cultural concepts can profitably be discussed with your language assistant.

Examples from the dictionary can be used as the bases for drills to develop fluency and/or automatic control of grammatical patterns. Idiomatic expressions and proverbs are often found in a dictionary as illustrative material and can profitably be culled and memorized.

In using your dictionary as a reference book or as an aid to reading, you may find it helpful to put a dot in the margin beside a word every time you look it up. When you find that you have looked up a word that already has two or three dots by it you should add that word, accompanied by an illustrative sentence or two, to your vocabulary slips to be worked on until mastered.

Many languages possess, as yet, no dictionary. If yours is one of these, you will find it necessary to produce and rely on the kind of do-it-yourself lexicon recommended in Chapter 12.

Many other languages have dictionaries which for one reason or another are incomplete or inaccurate. Perhaps you are learning a tone language but the tones of the words are not indicated in the dictionary. Or perhaps the only dictionary available to you is a "one-word" dictionary or a vocabulary list with but brief attempts at definitions and no illustrations. You can make good use of such material as aids to learning by working over them in your sessions with your language assistant to correct their deficiencies.

Chapter 10

HOW CAN I BEST MAKE USE OF RECORDED MATERIALS?

In some languages there are complete language courses on records or on tape. There is usually a textbook that goes with the recorded materials which instructs you on their usage. Before working too much with the records or tapes, check to see if they are good samples of the dialect the people around you speak. They may be based on a different dialect and be of limited use to you.

The primary disadvantage in learning from records and tapes lies in the fact that there can be no real communication between you and the recorded material. Your recording will never correct you or encourage you. It will, however, say the same thing over and over, be very valuable to you as a drill master to imitate over and over again until you have thoroughly learned the material.

Other recorded materials such as songs and stories may also be available in your language. These can be memorized, or used for listening practice. If you have either a record player or a tape recorder, make a point of getting as much material as you can that can be used for listening practice. Fill your house constantly with the sounds of the new language. You will be surprised at how much of the new language your mind will absorb if it is constantly exposed in this way.

If you have recorded materials available, use them as supplementary material. Your primary dependence must still be on a native speaker, but recorded materials are most useful when he is not around. Use such recorded material (just as you use grammars and dictionaries) for ideas for further work with your language assistant. They can be valuable source material. Have your language assistant help you in making the tapes so that the model voice on the tape is genuine. Your tapes will be most useful for independent language study and self-evaluation.

Tape-recorded drill materials can be very helpful if planned carefully. Prepare a detailed script allowing pauses at the proper places for your response. Such recordings can be patterned after those used in your introductory course. Almost any language assistant will be flattered at having his voice recorded and will cooperate nicely if you have carefully prepared what you want him to do. If he cannot read, then you must rehearse the script with him before the recording is made. Hand signals need to be worked out to let your assistant know when to speak and when to pause without interrupting the recording.

Another way to use your tape recorder is to record stories or other short passages of the language to study. Such material will be most linguistically reliable if it is not read, but spoken extemporaneously or from a few notes. Ask your language assistant to tell about some incident or tell a short story so you can record it. If your language assistant is literate, ask him to write down the recorded material from the tape as you play it back. Then, when on your own, listen to the tape and compare it with the written transcription. As you do so, make any written corrections which are necessary, indicating pauses, and other details he may not have transcribed.

Write the meanings that you know. If there are things that you cannot understand, at the next session with your language assistant play back the tape a sentence at a time, asking him to repeat what was said on the tape. Write down any illuminating details of contextual meaning, connotation, indications concerning the culture, etc., which your language assistant gives you.

You may want to investigate the meaning of a form or utterance by asking your language assistant for similar forms or substitute phrases, or by having him use the form in other contexts for you. It may also be helpful to have him re-tell the story in other words. On your own, then, alternately study the text and listen to the tape until the tape becomes perfectly intelligible. You may then find it valuable to memorize the passage.

To use your recorder in helping you memorize a passage, have your language assistant record the passage on tape in repeatable pieces (segments which you can mimic with the help of your written text) with pauses after them. By working with the recorded model for a period of time, you can learn to say the text so accurately that any native speaker of the language will be able to readily understand you. Be careful to learn the passage up to speed.

Recordings can also be made to use simply for listening--to help you become accustomed to the sounds and rhythm of the language. Record such things as legends, speeches, conversations. It does not matter if you cannot understand what you have recorded. As you listen over and over, you will understand little by little. After you have gotten more advanced in the language, you can listen to them and discuss them with your language assistant to clear up any remaining unclear portions.

It is frequently helpful to record your regular sessions with language assistants. Often, by recording the session, it is possible to use the time with the assistant more efficiently since it will not then be necessary to write so much down during the session--this can be done later from the recording.

These recordings can also provide you with a valuable check on your progress in the language. You will find it helpful to save certain of the recordings to replay at a later date (perhaps at some time when you feel discouraged over the slowness of your progress). Either such tapes, or tapes recorded especially for the purpose of gauging your progress, should be played back from time to time for you to listen for improvement in comprehension, quickness to respond, correctness of response, grammatical accuracy.

Chapter 11

WILL READING ON MY OWN BE HELPFUL?

Reading in the new language is not so essential as speaking it, but you may feel that you are ready for reading along with your regular program of language learning. Look for books, magazines, and newspapers. Some may be too difficult at first so lay them aside and come back to them at a later time. The easiest books available will probably be primers for teaching the language in the early grades of school. Buy (or borrow) some of these along with fable collections, books on public health, history, etc. Newspaper material, though it may be difficult, is good because it will add to your vocabulary words you need to know to discuss current events with those about you.

Reading materials should be used for reading--not translating. Do not resort to your dictionary any more often than is absolutely necessary to enable you to get the gist of the passage. The primary *purpose of reading for the* language learner is to expand your vocabulary. It will not make you speak more fluently.

As you read, watch for words related to familiar words. If the language is a tone language, writing in the tone marks in such written material will give valuable practice and help you to read more accurately.

Be alert while reading for material which would lend variety to your sessions with the language assistant. Books with pictures are very useful for planned conversation sessions. Other reading materials may also be used for oral practice. Once you have read through a passage several times, try reading it aloud with good pronunciation and the kind of expressions and gestures that would be appropriate. Work with your language assistant on reading aloud and it will help you in speaking.

SECTION IV

MY OWN MATERIALS

Chapter 12

HOW CAN I ORGANIZE MY MATERIALS?

If you are really serious about speaking the language well, you will be collecting new material every day. In order to really learn to use the new material in speaking, you will need to organize it. Producing a vocabulary file is an important first step in this.

One of the easiest ways to set up a vocabulary file is to use file cards or slips of paper filed in a shoe box. If you prefer to use a notebook instead, plan your organization very carefully before you begin. The primary advantage of file slips is that they are easy to rearrange. Thus they can be used for memorizing and reviewing vocabulary items.

Since reviewing is the key to successful learning, you will want to divide your file slips into two or three groups: 1) words and phrases not yet very familiar; 2) relatively familiar words and phrases which are not yet completely mastered; 3) items which have been mastered. The first group of slips should be reviewed several times a day; the second, perhaps once a day; and the third about twice a week. Frequent rapid reviewing of vocabulary items is more valuable than infrequent, more concentrated effort.

Slips should find their way from one group to the next as one masters them. Often it will be necessary to return items from groups 3 to 2 or from 2 to 1 if it is discovered that an original estimate of one's familiarity with the item was erroneous.

In preparing your file slips, put each new entry on a separate slip with several examples of the vocabulary item in context. Thus as you learn a word you are also learning phrases or sentences in which the word occurs. The emphasis is, therefore, on each vocabulary item in typical constructions. This method will also assist you in discovering the assisting the learner to build up his speed. Your sentence can be expanded to the right or to the left, or even in the middle.

I went.
I went home.
I went home quickly.
I went home quickly after lunch.
I went home quickly after lunch today.

The man could not work.
The old man could not work.
The little old man could not work.
The tired little old man could not work.
That tired little old man could not work.

I gave the book.
I gave him the book.
I gave the boy the book.
I gave the small boy the book.
I gave this small boy the book.

I brought it.
I brought it from home.
In the morning I brought it from home.
In the morning I brought it from home with me.
In the morning I brought the box from home with me.

Be sure to repeat each sentence after the language assistant until you have it correct with proper intonation. Often when you develop a more extensive vocabulary and become more familiar with grammatical forms, you relax your attention on the sounds. This type of drill is a good way to check yourself on the sound patterns of the language and to practice speaking up to speed.

3. The Reduction Drill. Begin with a long sentence (perhaps obtained from a book or newspaper) and reduce it by dropping one idea at a time. This drill sharpens your ability to recognize the various parts of an utterance and their relationship to each other. Be systematic about your reductions--first delete noun modifiers, then predicate modifiers, and so on.

In large towns where there is no firewood, the people collect dry cornstalks and take them home to cook with.
In the town where there is no firewood, the people collect dry cornstalks and take them home to cook with.

meanings of words from observation of the words in context rather than from their translations. A sample file card in Spanish might look like this.

Front of Card	Back of Card
gustar	like
1. Me gusta el reloj.	1. I like the watch.
2. Le gustan les cuadros.	2. He likes the pictures.
3. Me gusto el libro.	3. I liked the book.
4. Me gustaron los libros.	4. I liked the books.
5. Le gusta a usted el sombrero?	5. Do you like the hat?
6. Les gusta a ellos bailar?	6. Do they like to dance?

If you are in a language area with dialect problems, you may find it helpful to indicate in the upper right hand corner of each file slip the name of the person from whom you got the information. You may also find it helpful to list words derived from the word at the top in the lower left hand corner of each slip. Listing synonyms or antonyms on the slip can also be helpful to you. The vocabulary slip which is pictured is only the briefest form for meaningful language learning.

In setting up a vocabulary file, it is helpful to recognize that the words of a language may be divided roughly into two general classifications: content words and function words. Content words carry the bulk of the meaning load. Their number is limitless--new ones may be coined or derived from existing forms whenever necessary. Content words are typically divisible into such categories as nouns, verbs, or modifiers (of one or more types).

Function words, on the other hand, are the words which are of importance in the language primarily because of their grammatical function rather than because of their meaning. In this category will be all kinds of connectors (conjunctions), relaters (prepositions), and other particles which provide the grammatical "glue" which holds sentences together. Function words rarely lend themselves to literal translation, and are best defined by a description of their usage and grammatical significance. The way you define the words in your vocabulary file will have to take account of the two types of words.

The file slips may need to be altered some in order to be most useful for special kinds of vocabulary items. For function words or affixes, list the entry in the upper left on one side of the slip but instead of the meaning, list how it functions in the upper left on the reverse side. Then your examples listed should include various ways in which it is used in actual contexts with descriptions of its functions on the reverse side. For learning sets of pronouns, it may be more useful to put all of one set on a single file slip with several examples of how they fit into various contexts. In this case you would have several words in the upper left corner and several definitions on the back.

A more specialized type of vocabulary file is the "do-it-yourself lexicon." Each such vocabulary list includes among its entries only those words relevant to a special purpose. If you are working on an agricultural mission you might want a lexicon that gives the names of all the local crops, pests, tools and farming activities. A nurse would need the words necessary for discussing the parts and functions of the human body, hygiene, and diseases.

To make a lexicon that is custom fitted to your needs, get a small notebook. Put a divider toward the middle of it. The first half of your notebook will consist of work-sheets (on which items are simply jotted down as you hear them), the last part will be your lexicon. Sub-divide the last part according to an alphabetical or topical system--any way that seems logical to you--so that you can quickly locate words entered there.

The words that are entered in your lexicon may come from your vocabulary file, dictionary or reading material. Most of them, however, will be the result of your daily contact with the people as you carry out your mission.

If the people among whom you are working know that you are serious about learning their language, they will be eager to provide you with the names of the things you contact and the activities you are engaging in or observing. They may even be putting words into your mouth constantly--and become upset when you do not remember everything they "taught" you. Don't disappoint your teachers. Jot down the words and useful sentences that are provided, check them for pronunciation with your language assistant and practice them until you know them.

The work sheets in your notebook are for jotting down these new words and useful sentences that you hear and for making notes on the meaning which the context suggests. As soon as you have checked your pronunciation and understanding of the usage of these new words, transfer them to your lexicon so that you can refer to them whenever necessary for practice and review. In this way you can keep your work-sheets always ready for new material.

A word of caution, however: many people are suspicious of notebooks and the things that are written in them--especially people who cannot read. Always be willing to show your notes and explain them to the curious.

Chapter 13

HOW DO I DRIVE THE MATERIAL HOME?

Drills are necessary to help you master the basic grammatical patterns of the language. By focusing your drills on the phase of grammar or the subject you are trying to master, you will learn more rapidly. Setting up drills itself is a learning experience. A good drill should be organized to focus on a single aspect of the language.

Before beginning to construct a drill, spell out for yourself, very specifically, the point of the drill. Use your introductory course to provide models of the types of drills that work well in your language. If one kind of drill doesn't work smoothly and profitably, try another. Always be sure that you are learning something as you drill.

Drill material helps establish proper language habits. The more often you consciously ask, "What kind of_____ do you want?" or "What is_____ ?," the easier it will be to actually use such a question in an unplanned conversation. Drilling is the quickest way to firmly fix habits of usage.

Be sure you check all drills carefully with your language assistant. If he hesitates on whether a particular phrase can be used or not, scrap it--never dictate to him! If you find that your language assistant becomes bored and restless with drill practice, begin scattering drills all through your work period, never doing more than one at a time. Sometimes you can slip into drill material without announcing, "Now let's drill on such and such." By being imaginative in your planning your drilling will not be tiresome.

Your language assistant will be more interested in drilling as he sees your progress. As you take a pattern which you have drilled on with one group of words and reproduce it in a similar situation with different vocabulary, both you and your language assistant will be encouraged and see more clearly the value of drills. If you can establish a cooperative attitude on his part, it will result in more efficient learning on your part.

The kinds of drills that can be constructed are limited only by your imagination. They can be very elaborate or very simple. To begin with, work out two or three kinds that you can use with your language assistant, your language learning partner or your tape recorder. Following are illustrations of a few useful types of drills:

1. The Substitution Drill. In this type of drill, one sets up a frame and inserts various words (or phrases) into the blank. The frame is the part of the sentence that remains constant. The value of this drill is greater if you use practical frames that will be usable in everyday speech. Following are a few examples in English with a list of possible substitution words given with each:

We bought _________ at the market.
supplies
food
everything
meat
shoes

My friend came _________.
home
to school
here
with me
quickly

___________ saw the group of boys.
I
we
this man
everyone
all of us

Notice that the part of the sentence that is being drilled (indirectly) is the frame itself, not the words you are inserting. At first have your language assistant provide the model for each utterance and you imitate him. Then, when you have mastered the frame, begin saying the utterances completely on your own with your assistant's correcting you. Be sure to produce each utterance up to speed.

2. The Expansion Drill. Begin with a short sentence and expand it by adding one idea at a time. This type of drill is very useful in assisting the learner to gain automatic control of word order and grammatical patterns of the language. It is also helpful in

In the town the people collect dry cornstalks and take them home to cook with.
In the town the people collect cornstalks and take them home to cook with.
The people collect cornstalks and take them home to cook with.
The people collect cornstalks and take them home.
The people collect cornstalks and take them.
The people collect cornstalks.

4. The Transformation Drill. In this type of drill use sentences in which you understand the grammar points involved. The aspect of grammar which you are trying to master is one which produces a "transformation" or reworking of the base sentence. To drill on the negative forms, have your language assistant give the positive statement and you transform it into its negative counterpart. Do not change the time or the type of action.

I saw the boy. transformed--I didn't see the boy.
I will go today transformed--I won't go today.
He is coming soon. transformed--He isn't coming soon.
Bring the book. transformed--Don't bring the book.

He can also ask you a question which you must answer in the negative--

Do you have my book?	I don't have your book.
Could she have done it?	She couldn't have done it.
Will you bring it?	I won't bring it.
Can you stay for dinner?	I can't stay for dinner.

You may have noticed in the language you are learning that when you ask a negative question, the answer frequently seems to be the opposite of what you would expect (African languages, for example, work this way). In such languages the question seems to be treated as a statement and the "yes" or "no" answer given to indicate whether or not that statement is regarded as correct. If this is the case, transform drills of the following type should be employed to bring about automatic correct response according to the patterns of the new language.

Can't you come now?	Yes, I can't come now.
	No, I can come now.

Don't you want to go?	Yes, I don't want to go. No, I do want to go.
Didn't you bring it?	Yes, I didn't bring it. No, I did bring it.
Wouldn't she help you?	Yes, she wouldn't help me. No, she would help me.

This type of drill is helpful in learning a new aspect or tense of the verb, too. As the language assistant reads the sentences you have prepared in the past tense (already known), you transform each into the continuative.

My father came.	My father is coming.
I did the work.	I am doing the work.
He went to school.	He is going to school
We studied about farms.	We are studying about farms.

Specialized verb forms such as the passive, the causative, the stative, etc. can also be drilled effectively in this way. Always work from the known to that which you are trying to learn.

Plural forms of nouns and modifiers can be drilled in this way, as well. Transform the sentence by using a plural for the underlined word. Check your results with the language assistant to be sure you have made all the necessary changes to end up with a meaningful sentence in his language.

This girl lives nearby.	These girls live nearby.
I need a box.	I need boxes.
The big dog scared him.	The big dogs scared him.
That chair is old.	Those chairs are old.

Other aspects of a language which may profitably be drilled in this way include the indirect object, possessive pronouns, noun modifiers, relative clauses, and many others.

5. Word-Meaning Drill. The words of a language derive their meaning from the context in which they regularly occur--that is, words, like people, are known by the company they keep. The area of meaning of a given word is not the same from one language to another. This, therefore, is one of the important aspects to be explored in your language learning.

Take an individual word and try it out in several sentences with different contexts. Have your language assistant correct each sentence.

Don't be disappointed if some of your uses of the word are unacceptable. Then ask him to use the word in several sentences.

This type of drill can be of great assistance both in broadening your concepts and in giving you a feel for the range of meanings of words and expressions of the language.

I want a pound of beef.
The boy weighed forty-five pounds.
We buy our peanuts by the pound.
How many pounds does this bag hold?

6. The Combination Drill. This type of drill is especially useful for practicing the combination of two or more concepts in one sentence. The use of connectors between clauses and phrases varies greatly from language to language. Often it is difficult to break English habits of usage in order to learn the proper use of a connector in a new language. By focusing your attention on ways in which ideas can be worked in together in the combination drill, you will be better able to express your thoughts in everyday speech. This type of drill may be set up in several ways.

To learn the mechanics of forming a relative clause, list two ideas in two sentences, then combine them into one by using a dependent clause to modify the noun which is common to both sentences.

I say the boy. The boy was hungry.	The boy whom I saw was hungry.
He brought food. I asked for food.	He brought the food that I asked for.
That chair is near the door. I want that chair.	That chair which I want is near the door.
He lost my pencil. I use my pencil every day.	He lost my pencil which I use every day.

Or you can take a basic simple sentence and modify the underlined noun with a relative clause.

I saw the woman today.	I say the woman who brought them today.

The boy will come soon.	The boy whom you called will come soon.
Bring me the book.	Bring me the book that he sent you.
Where is the box?	Where is the box which I saw on the chair?

To drill on other ways of combining ideas, take two lists of simple sentences and combine them in any way you wish to make good complex sentences in the language you are learning. Check all your attempts with your language assistant and discuss the meaning of your combination with him to be sure you are saying what you think you are.

Simple Sentences:

I saw him
He will come soon.
She returned.
He brought it.
Wait for me.
I finished my work.

I cooked food.
He gave me the box.
We ate.
They will greet him.
I want to go now.
He left.

Possible combinations:

I saw him when he gave me the box.
Wait for me because I want to go now.
I finished my work before I cooked the food.
She returned after he left.
He brought it as we ate.
He will come soon since I cooked the food.
She returned then he left.
I finished my work after he left.
If I finish my work (then) I will cook the food.

After you have tried the six types of drills already suggested, you may wish to combine several types for variety and further learning experience. For example, the substitution drill and the expansion drill can be effectively combined with the following result:

We bought ______ at the market.
We bought supplies at the market.
We bought the supplies you asked for at the market.
We bought the many supplies you asked for at the market.
We bought the many supplies you asked for yesterday at the market.

My friend came__________ .
My friend came to school.
My friend came to our school.
My friend came to our new school.
My friend came to our big new school.
My friend came to our big new school which was built last year.

Chapter 14

WHAT IF I HAVE TO LEARN A LANGUAGE I HAVEN'T STUDIED?

If you find yourself surrounded by a language you haven't studied, you will need to set to work to begin learning that language. Use the introductory course that you have studied plus the tips in this handbook as the models for organizing your learning of the new language. With the help of these materials, you can begin producing a do-it-yourself introductory course of the new language.

Learning a language among those who speak it all the time (rather than in a classroom) will give you much opportunity for real practice. This can often provide more incentive for learning and using the language than it was possible to develop in the classroom language-learning situation. This kind of situation can, however, become a traumatic experience if you take your difficult position too seriously and don't learn to laugh with those about you as they laugh at your stumbling efforts.

Obtain grammars and dictionaries and any other materials available on the language and use them according to the guidelines presented in previous chapters of this book for using such materials. Use these materials as references for checking your findings and as sources of ideas as to what to listen to and look for in the new language. You should also try to obtain Dr. Nida's book, Learning a Foreign Language (see bibliography) which goes into much greater detail on this.

Do not expect your language assistant to describe the structure or history of his language to you. Make it clear to him that you want him to teach you his ordinary speech. Then approach grammar, and other areas of the language which require explanation, indirectly, as suggested in Chapter 4. That is, you do the necessary analysis yourself rather than trying to get an explanation of how it works from your language assistant.

In producing your do-it-yourself introductory course, choose a few of the most basic situations appropriate to the new culture. In most parts of the world, it is advisable to start with the most common greeting situations. Typical conversations dealing with such topics as common daily activities, occupations, buying, selling, or travelling within the country, should form the bases for lessons.

If the language you learned in training is either related to the new language or reflects a similar culture, you will find that it will be valuable at the start to obtain conversational material in the new language which is roughly equivalent to that which you learned in the introductory course which you took in training. You can get further assistance by obtaining good, pedagogically oriented courses of languages similar to the one you are learning and using these as models as well.

Though the specific purpose of this handbook is to assist those who will be continuing the learning of the language they started in training, you will find that most of the chapters contain material that is applicable to your situation as well. Such emphases as the necessity to listen constantly, to mimic accurately, to make frequent use of everything you learn, to concentrate especially on mastering those aspects of the phonology (particularly the pitch patterns) and grammar most different from those of your native language, and to work closely with a good, critical language assistant, are even more important guidelines for you than they would be in the case of those for whom the book was primarily written.

One of the special problems that you will have to face in learning a new language is that of how to write the language. If there is material already published in or concerning your new language, your problem may be solved. Often, however, even the presence of such materials does not settle the matter, since quite frequently they are either partial, inaccurate or unobtainable.

Linguists, when recording an unwritten language for the first time, depend primarily upon the alphabet with which we are familiar. They are, however, very careful to use each letter of the alphabet to symbolize one, and only one, phoneme in the new language. The letter g, for example, will be used to represent only the sound in get, never the sound in ginger (for which the symbol j would be better). The same is true for vowels which are commonly used by linquists with approximately the following values:

i similar to the i in machine.
e similar to the a in ache.

a as the o in the most common midwestern American pronunciation of hot (not that of those from the Philadelphia area and other places where they pronounce hot so that it rhymes with a midwesterner's pronunciation of caught).
o similar to the vowel sound in coat (if the word is said rapidly without drawing it out).
u similar to the vowel sound in boot.

Frequently, in order to have one symbol for each sound in the new language, it is necessary to supplement our alphabet. You may find that all of the extra symbols you need are employed in the writing systems of nearby languages. These should be your first source of additional symbols.

If further symbols should be necessary, you can make an adaptation of the symbol employed to represent a sound similar to the sound in question or to use a letter of the Roman alphabet which otherwise would not be used in the language. Some illustrations of these types of adaptations are:

ḍ to represent a sound slightly different from that represented by the letter d in the language.
f (a symbol not needed otherwise) to represent an f-like sound produced differently from the f sound in English.
r̃ to represent a trilled r since there are two r sounds in the language. (If there were only one r sound in the language, only one symbol would be necessary and this should be the simple r.)
ɔ to represent the vowel sound in the most common midwestern pronunciation of ought.
c to represent the sound spelled ch in English church. (Since c is not needed for any other sound and the h is superfluous.)
ŋ to represent the final sound in English sing.
ɛ to represent the vowel sound in English bet.
ę or ẽ to represent a nasalized e (when there is a distinction between nasalized and non-nasalized vowels in the language).
aa or ā to represent a long a (when there is a distinction between long and short vowels in the language).

If the language you need to learn is a tone language, the tone of each syllable should be represented, since tone is an essential feature of the language and you cannot learn to speak it properly without learning the words with their proper tones. You may, in fact, have to develop your own system for marking the tone even if the language already has a writing system. For most languages some or all of the following symbols may be used. These are usually written over the vowel of the syllable to which they apply, e.g.-

á̲ to represent high tone.

à̲ to represent low tone.

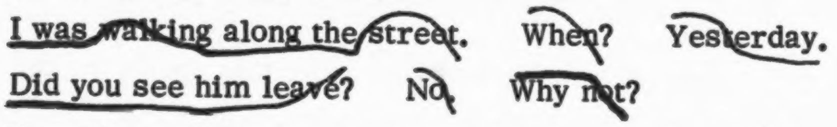
ā̲ or a̲̍ to represent mid tone.

â̲ to represent a tone which falls.

ǎ̲ to represent a tone which rises.

In representing the tones of a tone language, you may leave one tone unmarked. The absence of a mark for the unmarked tone will then serve to indicate what the tone is. If, for example, your language has high, low, falling and rising tones, you need only mark, e.g., high, falling and rising. Each unmarked syllable will then be a low tone syllable.

Marking intonational patterns is a bit more difficult. Nevertheless, particularly in the early stages of your language learning, it is very important to indicate the total pitch patterning of each utterance on your vocabulary slips. This may be done by lightly drawing a line over, under and through the utterance to indicate the highs and lows of the intonational (or the combination tonal-intonational) pattern of the utterance, e.g.-



I was walking along the street. When? Yesterday.

Did you see him leave? No. Why not?

If you have difficulty hearing and imitating the pitch patterns (whether tone or intonation) of a language, it is frequently helpful to get in the habit of whistling or humming the pitch pattern of each utterance before you attempt to say it. If you have difficulty identifying the tones of a given word in a tone language, work out a simple frame into which the word can be inserted next to a word the tones of which you know. For example, if in Hausa you know that the tone of the affix -sà (his) is always low but you are not sure of the tone of the final syllable of the word for "home," you can ask your language assistant to give you the expression meaning "his home." He will say "gidansà" (high tones are left unmarked) and the fact that the final syllable of the word for "home" is higher than (rather than the same pitch as) the low tone -sà will let you know that it possesses a high, rather than a low tone. And by comparing the first syllable of the word for "home" with the second syllable (which you have now concluded possesses a high tone), you will discover that it is on the same pitch level and thus is also a high tone syllable. Whistling or humming your language assistant's utterance is often more helpful in assisting you to discover the tones of the utterance than is simply imitating it.

As you already know, you cannot simply start out saying things in a foreign language; you must repeat and repeat and repeat until you say them perfectly. Mimic your language assistant, imitating carefully his pronunciation and exact tone of voice. Concentrate on listening and speaking at first. Only after you have a fair command of the language should you pay much attention to reading or writing (except as you write things down yourself on your vocabulary slips and in your notebook to help you learn).

Use the introductory course you have studied for suggestions for drills. In addition, set up many of your own drills and work hard at them for the purpose of making this new language a part of you. Review by yourself, with your language assistant, and with a friend. Get out with the people often to try out what you have learned.

In summary, the following are some of the more important tips presented here for learning a language you haven't previously studied:

1. Use the introductory course material that you have and other good pedagogical materials.
2. Work regularly with a language assistant.
3. Learn the language in situational contexts.
4. Mimic carefully and master the sounds, intonation, and word order.
5. Drill and practice continually.
6. Spend time with the people practicing and learning their language.
7. Use available materials in this new language as source material. Develop your own writing system and other materials if necessary.
8. Learn the grammar by your observations rather than by your language assistant's explanations.

SECTION V

MYSELF: THE MAJOR PROBLEM

Chapter 15

WHAT IF I MAKE MISTAKES AND PEOPLE LAUGH AT ME?

Brace yourself--they will laugh at you and your use of their language. Learn to laugh with them and not get discouraged. You will probably sound like a child in your attempts, but remember that you can only learn to speak by speaking.

You can develop the skill of speaking another language only through continual practice. If people feel free enough to laugh at you to your face, they aren't doing so much laughing behind your back. Your willingness to be the object of a certain amount of laughter will strengthen the bond of friendship between you and those whose language you are learning.

No one ever learned to speak a language without making mistakes. Your main problem is keeping from making the same mistakes over and over again. If you are alertly watching for their response, you will find your audience really very helpful in letting you know how well (or how poorly) you are speaking. Always be ready to admit you have erred and to ask for a better way to say it.

Some people have been so sure they were right that they have ruined their rapport with the people. These people are no longer told when they make mistakes and never do learn the language well. You should jot down the correction (or make a mental note of it), then later practice the correct way in private until it becomes a part of you.

When in an area where English is not spoken, you may want to teach your acquaintances a bit of English in order to capture their interest and so they can understand your problems. When we were working on a new language, some of the people became a bit impatient with us because we couldn't remember what they had taught us the day before. Around the campfire one night, however, one of them said, "We want to learn your language, will you teach us?" So we began teaching them "smoke," "fire," "stones," "wood," etc. The next evening as we reviewed, we discovered they had forgotten as many of our words as we had forgotten of theirs. While this kind of experiment is a valuable object lesson, be careful that you don't let it become more than an object lesson--you could end up teaching English all the time and this would be the end of your own language learning program.

Your emotions and attitudes play a very important part in your language learning. Much of your ability to get along with people and to adjust to your environment has come through your developing your own language as an effective tool. As you have grown, you have been taught to leave behind immature ways and to be independent. Now, you are back to complete helplessness--practicing new sounds, fumbling about with strange words, grasping for modes of expression, and laying aside your ability to think for yourself.

Simplifying what you are learning may make the content seem childish and cause you to feel ridiculous and embarrassed in working on it. Learning to tell fables and acting out planned dialogues and make believe situations tend to make you feel a child again. As you meet people you will find you often cannot say what you wish--but only what can be concocted from your limited vocabulary and knowledge of the language. Everyone learning to speak a new language and to live in a new cultural environment faces these same frustrations. It requires a very mature person to overcome these frustrations and effectively learn a new language.

You are sure to make mistakes, so prepare yourself for it. Be willing to make a fool of yourself, to lose prestige, to suffer embarrassment, in order to learn the new language. Learning it well will more than replace any prestige lost in these early stages of your language learning. Your persistence and sincerity to learn from the native speakers will win for you the respect of those who might have laughed at you.

Chapter 16

WHAT IF THE NEW LANGUAGE DOES NOT STICK?

Language learning is often much like pouring paint through a sieve. If you continue pouring and pouring, eventually some of it hardens around the edges and fills in some of the holes so your sieve will hold the paint. In a language learning situation, some can memorize quickly, others require much effort with complex mental association necessary to make things stick. The result depends primarily on the motivation, persistence and practice of the language learner, not upon his natural ability to learn in one way or another. The fact that all of us have learned at least one language well is evidence that we are able to learn another.

Some words and expressions for some unknown reason simply stick in your mind. These you will, almost without effort, be able to hear, think, and use often and so you will not have to waste much energy trying to remember them. There are other expressions which do not readily stick in your mind, however, and will need to be somehow reinforced to keep them there. If you can use your imagination, you can establish association links which act as scaffolding and are necessary until you have learned to use the new expression.

Some words can be learned by associating a known English word with the new word, e.g., hazo is Hausa meaning mist is close enough to the English haze to be easily associated and remembered. Other words may be retained by associating them with persons with that characteristic, e.g., perezoso in Spanish meaning "lazy" may be more easily retained, perhaps, if you are able to associate it with a particular person possessing this characteristic whom your mind's eye will picture whenever you hear the word. You may want to jot the person's name in pencil on the back of your vocabulary slip until you have learned the meaning of the word and can use it without thinking first of the person. Then erase the association link for it is no longer needed.

Associations may be established through words from any familiar language (not just English) which sound and/or mean something similar to the word you are working on in the language you are learning. Often you cannot find a strong association (one very much like the word you are trying to remember in sound or meaning) and will have to take a more round-about method of remembering. In an article on language learning (see Bibliography), Dr. Reyburn gives the following Bulu-English illustrations of this method, *nkól* meaning hill associated with *coal* since one digs coal out of *hills*; or *mane*, meaning to finish, can be remembered by thinking--I've *managed* to *finish*. As long as your association is sufficient to bring the word into your mind without wasting too much time, it is a useful one. As you regularly take this round-about route, you'll find now and then a step drops out and eventually the word will come without the round-about way of thinking.

No words should *always* require association links. Practice words that give you *difficulty* both in "inner speech" (discussed in Chapter 18) and in live conversation in order to fix them firmly in your mind. If you work a hard-to-remember word in this way, you will find that the association link soon is pushed out of the way and the word is yours to hear and use freely. You may have observed children doing just this as they discover a new word. They say it to themselves, use it to death in talking with others, and explore its scope by trying it out where it sometimes just doesn't fit.

It may help words stick in your mind if you fix them there in groups. For instance, words connected with sitting down could be grouped together: chair, stool, throne, bench-as could places where people live: city, village, town, country. You can also group words which possess the same root: obtain, contain, retain, attain, abstain. This type of grouping may make clear some valuable structural information in addition to assisting you in retaining the vocabulary items. You may find it useful to group vocabulary items such as these on the same vocabulary slip.

Such gimmicks for learning are entirely subjective. What works well for someone else may not work at all for you and vice-versa. Experiment with various approaches to the particular problems you find most bothersome and develop the methods that work best for you.

Chapter 17

HOW DO I TRAIN MYSELF TO HEAR BETTER?

After having studied and worked hard in a basic course, you expect to be able to hear with some understanding when you are finally surrounded by the language. But you will have to practice hearing. In English you do not need to hear everything that is said in order to understand. Our ears patch together fragments of speech and reconstruct the whole message even if we happen to miss a large percentage of what is said. This we can do because of our wide experience with the language and the culture--these teach us to pretty well know what to expect in most situations and most conversations.

Many words and relationships are partially predictable in our stream of speech owing to their limited distribution and our being so accustomed to hearing them associated. In the new language you haven't had sufficient experience to acquire this ability to piece together fragments of speech which you've heard. You will need to develop this through many hours of listening.

To develop your hearing ability, go out regularly and frequently to where the language is being spoken. You may feel that your time would be better spent by studying from a book but this isn't true. You will acquire the ability to function in the language much more quickly by spending the largest proportion of your time forcing yourself to learn through your ears. As you do this, recurring expressions will begin to jump out of the stream of speech you are hearing. Gradually you will find yourself becoming able to pick up the subject being discussed and more and more gaining the experience with the language that will enable you to guess the meanings of the unfamiliar expressions you hear. You still will need to hear and understand a much larger proportion of what is said than the native speakers of the language, but you are on your way.

Perception lag makes hearing a new language difficult for you. By the time you understand a word or two, the speaker has gone on and your concentration on a word or phrase has caused you to miss most of what he has said. Even though you may know a word or phrase you may not have understood it. Constant listening will enable you to increase your perception.

There are many places you can go to listen where you will not be expected to enter into the conversation. Listen for natural reactions for a clue as to how you should naturally react in the new language.

Civic programs, lectures, and political speeches are good for listening practice. If there are plays given in the language, attend them. Perhaps the acting associated with the speech will make it easier for you to understand. All of these experiences will sharpen your ability to predict what's coming next and to understand an utterance without actually understanding every word.

Listen to the language you are trying to learn on the radio if possible. At first it will seem much more difficult to understand radio speech because you cannot watch the speaker or stop his flow of words. Soon, though, you will begin to discover familiar words and phrases. If you can listen to the same program each day you will eventually be able to follow in thought patterns, too. News commentators are helpful because they usually talk about the same things you read about in the newspaper. Have the radio on even though you may be otherwise occupied. In this way you can provide your ears with listening practice minus the frustration of trying to understand every detail of what you hear. The radio can be very useful in developing your listening ability.

Training your ears to hear better should also be an important part of your sessions with your language assistant. Devote a fair proportion of your time with him to listening to him telling you stories or recounting experiences which he has had. As you hear him speaking his own language, learn to listen accurately enough so that you can imitate accurately features such as stress (loudness, pitch, and tempo), intonation and speed. Long after your session with him is finished you should be able to hear in your mind's ear your language assistant's voice as he pronounced the words and phrases.

If you sound natural to yourself when speaking the new language check again in your listening to see if you have slipped back to using English sounds and intonational patterns. If possible, use a tape recorder to truly hear yourself. Compare yourself with a native speaker. If you sound natural to yourself, you most likely sound very unnatural to him. Your concept of naturalness in language is structured by your native language. On the other hand, sounding natural to him will involve your sounding very unnatural to yourself, since your naturalness to him is dictated by his speech habits rather than by yours.

Don't ever stop listening or you will stop learning. Don't give up even though your imitations of a native speaker are poor. A poor imitation is likely to be understood where using just English sounds and intonation would be unintelligible.

Chapter 18

HOW CAN I BECOME MORE FLUENT?

To be useful, language must be automatic. This may be one of the more difficult phases of language learning. The day will come, though, if you persistently push ahead, when your reactions come first in the new language and then in English. Even more encouraging in the time when a question or comment in the new language flows from your mouth without having been planned word for word and then put together.

There are several ways you can help yourself in making speaking in the new language automatic. Practice thinking in the new language as you listen to someone else speak. Don't translate his words into English in your mind. Think in terms of picturing the situation, i.e., the word for dog in the language should bring to your mind a picture of a dog rather than the English word dog. If you can avoid having to translate from English, your response will be quicker and more meaningful.

Set aside a time each day (for example as you walk to your work or as you eat a meal by yourself) when you can talk to yourself about what you are actually doing--all in the new language. A child uses this technique in his daily routine to learn his language. He talks repetitiously of what he is doing and builds a world of fantasy from actual words and wishes within himself. He begins with the situation in which he finds himself, mixing the real world with the imaginary to produce something to talk about. An adult language learner can do the same. If you'll get yourself into this habit you'll find it very rewarding.

In order to develop the use of inner speech (talking to yourself), start with a basic utterance as a frame into which can be inserted other ideas.

I'm going home.
to school.
to town.
to market.

Do this with many basic utterances. As your ability increases you can carry on situational conversations and running narratives. Such inner speech can be engaged in at any time during the day as you go about doing many things which require little concentration. Conversing with yourself will help you to develop a good basic vocabulary about ordinary events and will provide for you the practice of repetition. Disciplining yourself in this way when you are alone will make it much easier for you to speak in acutal conversations with others.

It is helpful to memorize a fable, story, speech, or conversation. Once you have learned the passage, practice reciting it faster and faster until you are actually speaking at an abnormally fast rate. As you assimilate such material, you will find common phrases and thought patterns' becoming more and more automatic for you.

Drills play a very important part in making a language automatic. Always practice your words in meaningful combinations. Take a number of the most prominent short sentences and tool phrases in the language. Go over them again and again so that when you actually use them they'll sound right. For example:

I want ______ .
It's necessary to_________.
I think_________ .

You will acquire certain tool phrases because you need to use them often to get along in the new society. For example:

Say it again.
I don't understand you.
I only speak a little of your language.
I don't know.
What are you doing?

You should practice reading familiar material aloud and up to speed in the language having your language assistant jot down mistakes. As he corrects you, your pronunciation and intonation patterns will improve. Such reading will give you new ideas for sentence formation as well as accustom you to hearing yourself move right along in the new language without ruining the sound of it. If possible, make a tape recording of your language assistant's reading the text, then of your reading it, note the differences and learn from them. After working several days on it, again record your reading and watch for improvement.

Above all, determine to speak rapidly regardless of whether the grammatical forms are completely correct. Dr. Nida states that the man who never used an ungrammatical form never learned to speak a foreign language. Especially in working with your language assistant don't be satisfied until your atterance has come up to speed. You can check by having him say it for you and comparing the results. Language learning is over-learning i.e., over-imitating, exaggerating important features, drilling until you can say a thing faster than normal, and so on.

Chapter 19

HOW CAN I EVALUATE MY PROGRESS?

Language learning occurs typically in terms of a series of plateaus. There will be stages when you seem to be absorbing much of the language followed by plateaus when you don't seem to be learning anything new.

You may, at times, get the impression that you've mastered as much of the language as you are able or that your progress has been arrested. If this is the case, make a point to get yourself into new experiences to truly test your present ability. While you are on such a plateau, you can also usefully devote yourself to practicing what you have absorbed of the language and gaining self-confidence. The big danger is that you will stay on this level too long. It may be comfortable, but you must force yourself to move ahead if you are to achieve your goal.

You may become discouraged at certain stages and feel that your progress has been stopped completely. People who have succeeded in learning a second language, however, know that if you keep pushing ahead the time will come when things click and you are on the move again. Remember that you are trying to compress into a few months what a native speaker took years to learn. Even trained linguists don't usually master a new language in less than two years of full-time study. Your determination to make a success of your language learning is your best ally.

Since you are both teacher and student you will need to devise methods of checking your progress regularly. At certain stages of your learning you might need to evaluate your progress either daily, weekly or monthly, depending on the type of studying you are doing. There are many ways you can do this, and the following suggestions are merely guidelines.

Your vocabulary slips will provide a tangible way to evaluate your progress. You can also collect the questions you have been investigating and go over them, answering as many as possible to see if your understanding of them has improved. A word of caution

though--do not spend all your time learning about the language rather than learning to speak it. Another possible way to evaluate is to take several drills which were difficult and challenging when you first did them and do them again with your language assistant to see if you can do them correctly and with ease.

If you have a tape recorder, you can make regular recordings of your conversation time with your language assistant. As you re-listen, after a few weeks, or a month's work, you will understand much more readily and possibly hear some of your own previously unnoticed mistakes.

It is also helpful to list the subjects or situations you and your language assistant have been talking about over a period of time. Then ask him to prepare some review questions for you to answer orally on your self-evaluation day. Remind him of your limited vocabulary, but urge him to make the questions in his ordinary speech.

You can also test yourself by making a list each day of some summary sentences of the day's work. Lay them aside until your time for checking up on your achievements. Give the list then to your language assistant to check and correct your work. Have him read it to you a sentence at a time with you repeating the whole sentence after him. Have him keep repeating the same sentence until you are saying it correctly and up to speed. Then take time to translate the sentence correctly into English before you go on to another sentence.

The best way of all to check your ability is to go to a new area where you haven't had conversation before and see if you can be understood. Many times those who are used to hearing you speak their language can guess what you are trying to say after awhile even though your speaking ability may not be good. They overlook your errors and understand your version of their language. But the test really comes when you go elsewhere--can you make yourself understood easily?

Always be suspicious about the nice comments of those about you concerning your handling of their language. They want you to do well and are so pleased with your interest in their language. Rather than being honest with you and risking your giving up, they may say all kinds of nice things about how well you are doing. In Africa and the Orient people are by nature very hesitant to be honest with one who is regarded by them as a social superior, especially if the truth is not complimentary. So do not depend on the comments of others to accurately indicate your language ability.

Following is a check-list to help you measure your progress. Such a method is valuable only if you are honest and frank with yourself.

1. Am I still really listening to native speakers and correcting my own production of the language regularly to conform more closely to what I hear?

2. How much of what I hear am I able to understand in spite of the presence of unfamiliar words and phrases (without demanding a special translation of these new items)?

3. How many vocabulary slips have moved from the unfamiliar group? Am I adding new slips every day?

4. Have I gained new insights recently in working with and through this language?

5. How much of the time when I am hearing and speaking the language am I thinking in it rather than in English?

6. When I attempt to speak are words and phrases coming easier? Are some new phrases becoming more automatic? Are other new phrases coming with less effort?

7. What percentage of grammatical constructions which occur regularly do I have automatic control of?

8. How well am I able to communicate with people with whom I have had no previous contact?

You are on your own now, good luck.